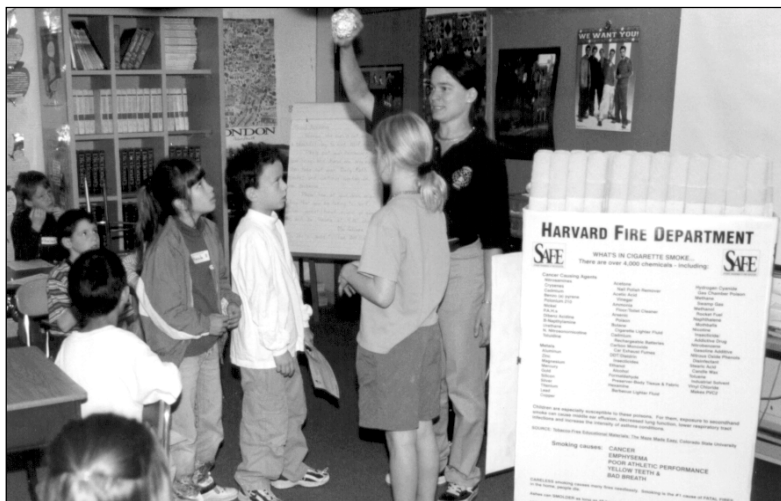


# DFS QUARTERLY

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES • STEPHEN D. COAN, STATE FIRE MARSHAL • VOL. 6 • ISSUE 1 • MARCH, 2001

## Harvard's S.A.F.E. Program Teaches Tobacco Awareness



*Oona Aldrich, Harvard S.A.F.E. Educator*

This year the Harvard Fire Department developed and implemented an exciting new program for tobacco awareness. With strong emphasis on visual and physical models, this interactive program has produced excellent results.

They constructed a large cigarette pack with many features to keep the students interest including a mock name and a skull and cross bones pictured on the front side. It also has the surgeon generals warning on the side, as well as

hidden built in shelves to store additional props for the presentation. On the back of the aid, it lists the common chemicals, metals and carcinogens that may be found in cigarettes as well as their impact. This aid is scaled proportionally and as true in its visual appearance as possible.

### **Lesson Plan**

After introductions, the instructor begins with a short verbal assessment of the class. Then a student is individually called upon to choose an actual item

*Continued on back page*

## New Fire Service Grant Program Update

The Congress has created a new \$100 million federal grant program for our nation's fire service community. By the time you receive this edition of the DFS Quarterly, the formal notice of the grant should have appeared in the Federal Register (target publication date is March 15.)

Because the program is being devel-

oped at a fast pace, with constantly changing information, we strongly recommend that interested communities regularly check the USFA website (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/grants/>) for the latest information on the grant application process. DFS will attempt to provide fire departments with the most current information as it becomes available. ♦



### **From the Desk of the Fire Marshal**

*Stephen D. Coan*

#### **Firefighting Equipment Grants Awarded**

On February 1, 2001, Governor Paul Cellucci and Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift announced the grant awards from the state's first Firefighter Safety Equipment Program to 365 fire departments and fire districts across Massachusetts. This firefighter equipment money will allow communities to fund their own priorities for equipment purchases that will make a real difference in the ability of every town to protect both civilians and firefighters from the danger of fire. This money is an important tool to maintain a community's safety.

Program funds can be used to purchase thermal imaging cameras and firefighter safety equipment from an approved list. In addition, the new fund designates \$200,000 for the Department of Fire Services to administer grants and provide a series of fire training programs relative to firefighter safety and survival.

Under the law, a five-member Firefighter Safety Equipment Board evaluated existing and emerging firefighter safety technology and recommended a list of approved firefighter safety equipment. The board members were Chief Thomas Garrity, President of the Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachu-

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## From the Fire Marshal *continued from page 1*

setts, Robert McCarthy, President of the Fire Fighters' Association of Massachusetts, Sen. James Jajuga and Rep. Timothy Toomey, the senate and house chairmen of the Committee on Public Safety, and the State Fire Marshal. In order to adhere to the aggressive timetable for the distribution of funds, it was necessary for the board to work expeditiously in developing recommended guidelines for the Secretary. The board created a \$4.8 million fund with a \$13,000 base award per community with a recommended tiered system of distribution for the remaining \$5 million based on population estimates for the year 2000. I would like to thank the Director of the Programs Division at the Executive Office of Public Safety, Michael O'Toole, for travelling throughout the state with DFS staff

educating fire officials on the specifics of the grant process and for overseeing the prompt release of funds.

On behalf of the Commonwealth's firefighters, fire officers and fire chiefs, I would like to thank the Administration – Gov. Cellucci, Lt. Gov. Swift, and Secretary Perlov – and the members of the Legislature for the support of this program. The benefits will be felt by the fire department in every city and town across the commonwealth.

### **Stow Expansion Takes Small Step Forward**

When the Department of Fire Services was created in 1995, part of the long-term plan included providing permanent working spaces for all the fire-related agencies that came together to create the new department. With the permission of Secretary Perlov, I was able to meet with David Perini, the

new head of the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) about the plans for the Stow facility expansion. The result of this meeting is a small but significant step forward on the road to realizing the expansion plan. DCAM has committed to use existing funds to provide further design work on the proposed \$25 million expansion. They will seek an architect/designer to work over the next 15 months on plans and design details leading up to construction documents. This moves the project along to the next step, bringing us closer to realizing our goal of liberating our staff from the temporary, modular workspace they currently inhabit. ♦

## Changes to 527 CMR 2.00 Fireworks Create User's Certificate

On February 1, 2001, a proposal to amend 527 CMR 2.00 was submitted to the Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR) by the Office of the State Fire Marshal that would establish a Fireworks User's Certificate. This certificate is modeled after the Explosives User's Certificate as found in 527 CMR 13.00. The Fireworks User's Certificate would be issued to the fireworks company and would be based on evidence of a valid bond as well as notarized statements indicating an understanding of the Massachusetts laws and regulations pertaining to fireworks and attest that the fireworks will be transported, stored and handled according to regulations. The certificate cycle will follow the expiration date of the bond and there will be no fee required.

The proposed amendment has been referred to the BFPR fireworks sub-



committee for review which reported back to the full Board at their March 1, 2001 meeting. The amendment was adopted as an emergency amendment and placed on the agenda for the May 3, 2001 public hearing. As of June 1,

2001, all fireworks shows will have to have a Fireworks User's Certificate. Application materials are being distributed to all fireworks and special effects companies. Information will also be sent to all fire departments shortly.

### **Fireworks Seminars Planned**

On a related note, the Office of the State Fire Marshal is currently working with the Massachusetts Fire Academy on the development of a series of seminars to train fire department personnel who conduct fireworks display inspections. These seminars will be held at several locations across the Commonwealth prior to the start of the upcoming fireworks season. Watch for flyers advertising the dates and locations of these important programs. ♦

# Opinion of the Attorney General

## *Application of State Fire Laws & Code on State Owned and State Authority Owned Buildings*

The Secretary of Public Safety has requested an opinion of the Attorney General, on behalf of the DFS, regarding the scope of enforcement authority of the State Fire Marshal's Office and the local fire service to enforce the fire laws (C.148) and code (527 CMR) in both state and state authority owned buildings.

In response, the Attorney General issued an opinion (No. 00/01/-1) on October 30, 2000, which analyzed whether the enforcement of MGL Chapter 148 (fire laws) and 527 CMR (code) was applicable to state and state authority owned buildings as it is currently enacted. After due consideration and review of prior findings of former Attorneys General the conclusion was that:

- The state fire code/laws do not apply to state owned buildings;
- The state fire code/laws may apply to state authority owned buildings (i.e. Massport, MBTA, MWRA, etc.)

The Attorney General concluded that applicability to state authority owned buildings is determined on an individual review of the particular authority's legislative enactment and should be reviewed independently. The Attorney General's opinion also included a recommendation to either bring state and state authority owned buildings into voluntary compliance or file express legislation to cover both state and state authority owned buildings, giving oversight to the State Fire Marshal.

The State Fire Marshal agrees with the Attorney General's opinion and offers two possible solutions to remedy the problem:

- Request the Governor file an executive order to require all state agencies to voluntarily comply with the fire code or;
- File new legislation to make the law and code applicable to all state owned buildings and state authority owned buildings.

The State Fire Marshal would like the fire services' input as to which approach would be preferable so that it may be conveyed to the Secretary and the Governor. ♦

## CSX Railroad Agreement

During the past year, the Department of Fire Services and CSX Corporation, who runs one of the largest railroads in the nation, executed a memorandum of understanding which established a voluntary protocol aimed at preventing fires caused by rail maintenance activities.

In summary, CSX has agreed to telephone the head of the appropriate fire department prior to engaging in rail work that may generate sparks or open flames. Such notification will be given no more than one (1) week and no less than 48 hours prior to starting such work. CSX has also agreed to contact the Commonwealth's Department of Environmental Management (DEM) no sooner than 24 hours prior to said work to ascertain the current

fire rating conditions. CSX has agreed not to conduct such work on class 5 days (high fire risk days). On class 4 days, CSX may conduct the work under certain restrictions. On such class 4 days, the head of the fire department has the option of visiting the work site to review the employed fire safety procedures. Should the head of the fire department determine that such procedures are not adequate, the chief may elect to provide a fire detail at CSX's expense.

The procedures are not applicable if CSX is required to make emergency rail repairs. However, CSX shall endeavor to notify the appropriate fire department as soon as possible and work with the department, particularly on class 4 or 5 days.



The State Fire Marshal commends CSX for its cooperation in developing and employing these procedures. Enhanced communications and cooperation with local fire departments should lead to a dramatic reduction in fires caused by such rail maintenance activities. ♦

## Industrial Training Group on the Web

**Their URL is: [www.state.ma.us/dfs/mfa/indust.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dfs/mfa/indust.htm)**

The Industrial Group provides training programs for private corporations who need to comply with federal and state regulations. The group can also provide programs for fire departments who join in partnerships with companies to provide specialized services. These training programs can be held anywhere, in state, out of state, at the employer's site, or right at the DFS Stow facility. They can be done any hour of the day or night (yes, we can do third shifters.) A partial listing of classes is as follows:

SCBA Training  
Confined Space Training  
Fire Extinguisher Training  
Hazardous Materials Training  
Evacuation Procedures Training  
Hotel-Motel Safety Training  
Health Care Industry Training  
Anti-Terrorism Programs

The phone numbers are 978-567-

3206, 3207, and 3208. Call for a brochure or a *free* site visit to discuss your training options.

Staff members are Paul F. Vincequere, Program Coordinator; Assistant Coordinators Dick E. Erban, Robert J. Zalewski, and Scheduling & Logistics Facilitator Donna M. Romano.

We also offer six open enrollment seminars each fiscal year. The schedule for this year is as follows:

March 7, 2001  
Industrial Anti-Terrorism  
  
April 23, 2001  
Industrial Fire Safety  
  
May 9, 2001  
Hotel-Motel Fire Safety  
  
May 23, 2001  
Industrial Fire Safety  
  
June 4, 2001  
Sprinkler Systems  
  
June 6, 2001  
Health Care Seminar

## Licensing Exams

All licensing exams will be given at the Department of Fire Services, Stow campus, in Room 502 or the auditorium, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The same exams are given on the same dates, at the same times at the western Massachusetts office of the Department of Fire Services, One Prince Street, Northampton.

| Exam Date                          | Type of License                                     |
|------------------------------------|---|
| March 21, 2001<br>9:00AM - 12:00PM | Cannon/mortars,<br>special effects and<br>fireworks |
| April 12, 2001<br>9:00AM - 12:00PM | Fire extinguishers                                  |
| April 19, 2001<br>9:00AM - 12:00PM | Blasting  |

The Office of the State Fire Marshal issues licenses to people and companies engaged in fireworks, blasting, explosives, cannon and mortar firing, special effects, special hazard systems and portable fire extinguishers. Information on applications and exam dates to obtain new licenses or to renew existing licenses may be obtained by contacting Joanne Melanson, at (978) 567-3700. Examinations for licenses are held quarterly. ♦

## NEAFC Fire/Rescue/EMS Expo and Conference

The New England Association of Fire Chiefs will be holding their 79th Annual Fire/Rescue/EMS Expo and Conference, the largest in New England, June 23-25, 2001 at the Eastern States Exposition, home of the "Big E", West Springfield, MA. Displays of over 350 exhibits of equipment, apparatus and ambulances are expected. Admittance and parking are free. For conference information contact Ret. Chief Richard Wehter, Sec./Trea. at 781/749-8626 and for exhibit information contact Ret. Chief Charles Maurais at 781/631-3086. ♦

## Seminars on New Regulations for Abandoned/Vacant Buildings

The Department of Fire Services in cooperation with the Board of Building Regulations and Standards, Mass. Building Commissioners Inspectors Associations, Southeastern Mass. Building Officials and Western Mass. Building Officials present a series of seminars on the new fire and building code regulations on vacant and abandoned buildings. To register: use the standard MFA registration form and mail or fax to: Office of the State Fire Marshal, P.O. Box 1025, State Road, Stow, MA 01775, Attn: Lydia Bogar or Fax to (978) 567-3199. Meeting and lunch fee is \$20.00 or the meeting and coffee fee is \$10.00 and will be collected at the door. ♦

| Date     | Location                                    |
|----------|---|
| March 14 | Holiday Inn, Taunton                        |
| March 29 | DFS Western Mass. Office, Northampton       |
| April 5  | Municipal Office Building, West Springfield |
| April 13 | DFS, Stow Campus                            |
| April 26 | Florian Hall, Dorchester                    |

# NEWS FROM CPSC

The following are excerpts from press releases issued by the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding products recalled for

fire or burn hazards. Consumers should immediately stop using any of these products and contact the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

or the manufacturer for instructions on how to proceed. ♦



*December 20, 2000 - Release # 01-058*

## **CPSC, White Outdoor Products Co. Announce Recall of Lawn and Garden Tractors**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), White Outdoor Products Co., (a subsidiary of MTD Products Inc.) of Cleveland, Ohio, is voluntarily recalling about 9,700 lawn and garden tractors. The hood latch on these tractors can damage the fuel tank and cause fuel to leak when the hood is raised and lowered, presenting a fire and explosion hazard.

White Outdoor Products Co. has received one report of the hood latch damaging the fuel tank. No reports of fuel leaks, fires or injuries have been received.

The riding lawn and garden tractors involved in the recall are year 2000 models, with 42, 46 or 50-inch mower decks, 16 to 25 horsepower engines and a foot pedal speed control. A blade can be attached to the front of the tractor for use as a snowplow in winter. The tractors included in this recall are

red and gray two tone in color.

The model numbers included in the recall are: 13A0616G190, 13AT606H190, 13AT616H190, 13AJ616H190, 14AJ816H190 and 14AZ816P190, manufactured between November 1, 1999 and August 8, 2000. White Outdoor Products Co. will help consumers identify if their tractor is a part of the recall. Consumers will need to write down the tractors model and serial numbers, which are located under the seat of the tractor.

White Outdoor Products Co. dealers nationwide sold the tractors from November 1999 through December 2000 for between \$1,600 and \$3,400.

Lawn and garden tractors that have a green "X" next to the model number are not included in this recall.



*December 20, 2000 - Release # 01-057*

## **CPSC, DEWALT® Industrial Tool Co. Announce Recall of Battery Chargers**

DEWALT Industrial Tool Co., of Baltimore, Md., is voluntarily recalling about 1.7 million battery chargers used with cordless power tools. The battery chargers include two models of DEWALT (DW9107, DW9108) and

two models of Black & Decker Industry & Construction™ (97015, 97016) brands. The battery charger can fail to automatically shut off after the battery is fully charged, which can cause the battery to burst, and poses fire, burn and electrical shock hazards to consumers.

DEWALT has received two reports of batteries bursting and consumers suffering injuries, including minor lacerations and a minor burn.

The DEWALT battery chargers have model numbers DW9107 and DW9108, which is written on the front of the charger. The recalled DEWALT chargers have date codes from 9616 through 9752 located on the bottom of the charger. The DEWALT chargers are black with yellow lettering. "DEWALT" is written on the front of the chargers.

The Black & Decker Industry & Construction battery chargers have model numbers 97015 and 97016. The model number is written on the front of the chargers. They have date codes from 9616 through 9752, which is located on the bottom of the chargers. The Black & Decker Industry & Construction chargers are black. "Black & Decker Industry and Construction" is written on the front of these chargers.

Home center and hardware stores sold these battery chargers nationwide from May 1996 through August 2000 for between \$50 and \$60. During the same time, these chargers also were sold with some DEWALT® and Black & Decker Industry & Construction cordless tools.

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*December 14, 2000 - Release # 01-054*

**Rebate Program for Recalled Dishwashers: Recalled Units Still Being Used, Creating Risk of Fire**

In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), General Electric Appliances Co., of Louisville, Ky., is voluntarily offering a free repair option in the form of a rewiring for its recalled GE and Hotpoint dishwashers. With the free rewire option, a GE-authorized technician will rewire the slide switch at no cost to consumers. This supplements the original rebate program announced October 19, 1999. The dishwashers have a slide switch that can melt and ignite, presenting a fire hazard. CPSC is aware of approximately 90 incidents associated with these dishwashers. GE manufactured 3.1 million of these dishwashers between 1983 and 1989.

In the recall announced last year, GE provided consumers with a rebate toward the purchase of a new dishwasher. CPSC and GE are announcing the supplemental rewiring option to increase the effectiveness of the original program, which has to date been implemented in over 628,000 units. CPSC and GE are cooperating in an effort to reach people who may not have previously come forward.

Both the CPSC and GE strongly urge consumers who have not replaced their recalled units under the original rebate program to contact GE right away to schedule a free rewiring or participate in the original rebate program. Until the dishwasher has been rewired, consumers should keep the dishwasher door unlatched at all times to prevent the flow of electrical current that creates a risk of fire.

The slide switch allows consumers to choose between heated drying and "energy saver" functions. Over time, the slide switch can melt and ignite, presenting a fire hazard. In the free

rewiring program announced today, GE-authorized technicians will rewire the slide switch, eliminating it from the electrical circuit and thereby eliminating the fire risk.

There have been approximately 90 incidents of fire, smoking and melted switches, 14 of which included fires that spread beyond the dishwasher. Approximately 10 incidents have occurred since the recall announcement. No injuries have been reported.

The GE and Hotpoint dishwashers involved are models beginning with GSD500D, GSD500G, GSD540, HDA467, HDA477, or HDA487 with a serial number that has a second letter of A, M, R, S, T, V or Z (for example, BM12345). The model and serial numbers are located on a rectangular label that is on either the right or left front edge of the inner tub. The GE or Hotpoint brand name is on the front of the dishwasher.

Consumers that have one of these recalled dishwashers should immediately discontinue use, unlatch the door, and contact GE at 1-800- 599-2929 anytime or at [www.geappliancerecall.com](http://www.geappliancerecall.com).



*January 23, 2001 - Release # 01-071b*

**Rope Lights Recalled by CO2UCH**

PRODUCT: Rope Lights - CO2UCH of Glendale, Calif., is voluntarily recalling about 27,300 rope lights with controller boxes. Rope lights are lights inside a plastic cord used for decorative lighting. The lights are 9 feet long with a white electrical cord. The controller

box has the following identifying information imprinted on one side "CHENG TUNG, MODEL CT-028" The other side of the controller is shaped to look like a bear or dog wearing a bow tie. The animal's feet are the control buttons. The lights were sold in a blue box, labeled in part, "ROPE LIGHTS, 9 FT. OF TWINKLE FUN, CO2UCH, MADE IN CHINA" Gift stores and catalogs sold the lights nationwide from August 2000 through October 2000 for between \$20 and \$24. The lights also were given as prizes by fundraising organizations during this period.

**PROBLEM:** The rope light controller, which allows consumers to choose the type of light motion, such as flash or chase, can short circuit. This poses shock, fire and burn hazards to consumers.

**INCIDENTS/INJURIES:** CO2UCH has received six reports of the controller sparking. One consumer received an electrical burn that blistered the skin.

**WHAT TO DO:** Stop using these rope lights immediately, and call CO2UCH toll-free at (877) 652-4087 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. PT Monday through Friday to receive information about obtaining a full refund or credit. Consumers also can contact the company on its web site at <http://www.supercouch.com/recall.htm>.



*January 23, 2001 - Release # 01-071c*

**Lamps Recalled by Environmental Lighting Concepts**

PRODUCT: Lamps - Environmental Lighting Concepts, of Tampa, Fla., is voluntarily recalling about 1,560 floor

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lamps. The floor lamps are sand colored, stand about 4 feet tall and have flexible gooseneck arms to adjust the position of the fluorescent lights. They are used for reading or by crafters for sewing or needlework. Labels indicating "OTT-LITE TRUECOLOR FLOOR LAMP" on the stand and "OTT-LITE" on either side of the shade identify the recalled floor lamps. Check the label on the OTT-LITE ELECTRONIC BALLAST plug. The plug on the recalled lamps have white lettering on a black label and bear the model number DMBLH-18W or DMBLP- 18W. Craft, hobby and fabric stores, including Hancock Fabrics, sold the lamps nationwide from November 2000 through December 2000 for about \$170.

**PROBLEM:** An electronic component inside the plug can overheat, presenting a fire and burn hazard to consumers.

**INCIDENTS/INJURIES:** Environmental Lighting Concepts has received three reports of the plugs overheating, including one plug that produced smoke. No injuries or property damage has been reported.

**WHAT TO DO:** Stop using the recalled floor lamps immediately, unplug them and contact Environmental Lighting Concepts for free replacements. Consumers should call the company toll-free at (800) 842-8848 between 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

*December 6, 2000 - Release # 01-048*

**CPSC Reminds Parents About Nightwear Safety. T-shirts cause nearly 200 burn injuries to children each year.**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is reminding parents to choose sleepwear that will protect children from serious burn injuries. "Winter is here and parents will be shopping for pajamas that will keep their children warm during the cold weather," said CPSC Commis-

sioner Thomas Moore. "Be sure to shop for safety by looking for tags that say the garment is flame-resistant or snug-fitting."

Loose-fitting T-shirts and other loose-fitting clothing made of cotton or cotton blends should not be used for children's sleepwear. These garments can catch fire easily, burn rapidly, and are associated with nearly 200 emergency-room-treated burn injuries to children each year. Children are most at risk from burn injuries that result from playing with fire (matches, lighters, candles, burners on stoves) just before bedtime and just after rising in the morning.

CPSC sets national safety standards for children's sleepwear flammability to protect children from serious burn injuries if they come in contact with a small flame. Under federal safety rules, garments sold as children's sleepwear for sizes larger than nine months must be either flame-resistant or snug-fitting.

Flame-resistant garments are made from inherently flame-resistant fabrics or are treated with flame retardants and do not continue to burn when removed from a small flame. These sleepwear garments are often labeled "Flame Resistant."

Snug-fitting sleepwear is made of stretchy cotton or cotton blends that fit closely against a child's body. Snug-fitting sleepwear is less likely to come into contact with a flame and does not ignite as easily or burn as rapidly because there is little air under the garment to feed a fire.

"If you're buying snug fitting sleepwear, buy true to size," said Moore. "Because the garment is not flame-resistant, it must fit snugly for safety." Yellow hangtags and permanent labels on snug-fitting children's sleepwear, made of cotton or cotton blends, remind consumers of the importance of a snug fit.

*December 28, 2000 - Release # 01-063*

**CPSC Warns Winter Storm Victims: Do Not Use Gasoline-Powered Generators Indoors Because of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is warning residents in areas hit by winter storms that gasoline-powered generators should not be used indoors because of the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Deaths from CO poisoning have occurred after ice storms in the past.

CO poisoning from the use of fuel-burning appliances kills more than 200 people each year and sends about 10,000 to hospital emergency rooms for treatment. Others die from CO produced while burning charcoal inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent.

CO is a colorless, odorless gas produced by burning any fuel. The initial symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu, and include dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea and irregular breathing. Exposure to high levels of CO can cause death.

"Gasoline-powered generators should be left outdoors at all times to prevent CO poisoning," Brown said. "And every home should have a CO alarm that meets the requirements of the most recent Underwriters Laboratories or International Approval Services standard."

In addition, the safety agency is warning about fire and CO hazards from space heaters and kitchen ranges used to heat the home. Keep space heaters away from flammable materials and turn them off when you leave the room. Do not use a space heater while you sleep, and never use a kitchen range to heat a room. These appliances can ignite nearby combustibles or produce carbon monoxide, either of which could be fatal. ♦

# Sexual Harassment and Playing with Fire

*By Michael Goldberg, President and Founder of Building Blocks Consulting*

The role of a firefighter is typically viewed as a “man’s” job. Dragging heavy hoses off trucks, hoisting and climbing ladders, using equipment for forced entries, and carrying victims out of burning buildings requires a great deal of ability, physical strength, and stamina. Living in fire stations and sharing sleeping quarters, restroom facilities, housekeeping chores, and the upkeep of equipment are the day in the life of a firefighter. Firefighters work in a pseudo-military organization where aggressive performance in the line of duty is the main criteria for acceptance into the fire fighting culture. Women are slowly infiltrating the ranks of the fire service, one of the last bastions of the male-dominated occupations. The first female firefighter was hired in 1974 in the Arlington, Virginia Fire Department. When she first applied for the job, she was told “go back to your kitchen.” She recently retired as battalion chief within the same department.

Just to put the numbers in perspective, there are approximately 300,000 firefighters in the U.S. today, 5000 of which are female. Would you believe that there are only 10 fire departments in the whole country that have female chiefs? These figures may not seem like a lot in this day and age, but the numbers continue to rise, as are the dynamics that lend themselves to sexual harassment.

## **What is Sexual Harassment?**

As a training consultant and in my growing contact with fire and police departments, it amazes me how many people, both male and female, are unsure of what sexual harassment is. Or what it isn’t. Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature that are connected to decisions about employment or that create an intimidating, hostile, or

offensive work environment.” (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)

There are misconceptions about sexual harassment in many organizations today, especially in environments where one gender dominates another. For one thing, all gender-related incidents are not necessarily sexual harassment. For a situation to constitute sexual harassment, you must ask yourself two questions: Is the situation offensive? Is the situation sexual in nature? If the answer to these two questions has been formally investigated and proven to be yes, then it is in fact sexual harassment. Another common misconception about sexual harassment is that it must be gender-related. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Federal agency that administers and enforces Title VII states that sexual harassment is gender-less. In other words, a man can sexually harass a woman or another man. Conversely, a woman can sexually harass a man or another woman. The legal aspects of all of these scenarios are the same as are the risks and consequences.

Through the research of various surveys and personal observation, I am comfortable expressing the following thoughts although they may not be so comfortable to read. First and foremost, sexual harassment is a legitimate problem in fire departments. It is contributing to firefighter stress that can affect emotional and physical well being and morale. Victims are reporting its immediate adverse effect: they fear the workplace and use sick leave to avoid work. The long-term consequences of sexual harassment can impede their performance on the fire ground, reduce career commitment, and result in increased turnovers among firefighters. In addition to the effects on the individuals themselves, sexual harassment can adversely affect work group performance and organiza-

tional productivity.

Second, current sexual harassment policies are simply not working. Although many fire departments have an official sexual harassment or discrimination policy in place, many do not train officers and firefighters on its meaning and application. Firefighters are often unaware of the policy’s existence and its reporting procedures or perceive nothing would be done. As a result, the majority of sexually harassed firefighters do not report the incident(s). The fact that fire departments did not take any formal action in two-thirds of reported cases certainly reinforces the lack of faith in formal remedies. Harassed firefighters’ reluctance to use the formal complaint system may also be due to their fear of adverse consequences. In fearing ridicule, disbelief, blame, isolation, exclusion, and possible retaliation, harassed firefighters suffer stress, informally handle the situation, or rely on other resources.

A third implication is that women firefighters are treated differently in the fire service workplace. Sexist behavior and stereotyping are spilling over into the fire station. As the new and probably only “girl in the station,” women firefighters are perceived as females first, and firefighters second. Women firefighters are vulnerable to sexual harassment in the workplace of firemen.

## **As leaders and managers, what should we be doing about it?**

In 66% of reported cases, fire departments did not take any formal action to resolve the sexual harassment complaints. Instead, the reporting of alleged sexual harassment incident(s) evoked a variety of responses including a “boys will be boys” attitude to disciplinary action for “making waves” to being told to “ignore it.” An amazing 12% of those that filed a



## Lighter Advisory

On September 25, 2000, State Fire Marshal Stephen Coan issued an advisory to all heads of fire departments and fire districts on disposable, multi-purpose, and novelty lighters.

In January of this year, Chief David LaFond brought to his attention the tragic death of a three-year-old child in the City of Holyoke. The child died three months after being critically burned in a fire caused by children playing with a "child resistant" disposable lighter.

As a result of Chief LaFond's report, this office has begun a two pronged effort in regards to disposable, multi-purpose and novelty lighters. Marshal Coan, along with his counterparts

from other states have been lobbying the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) to strengthen their standards for the testing of lighters. The current standard is performance based and does not adequately address the issue of children from families with adult smokers. Secondly, the State Fire Marshal's Office has been actively involved in working with fire departments and local investigators from the CPSC in getting unsafe lighters off the market.

There have been two recent notable successes. The first, as a result of a report from the Lynn Fire Department, where unsafe novelty lighters were recalled by the distributor and a nationwide retail chain. Second, the

Holden Fire Department brought to our attention novelty lighters resembling candy dispensers, and ballpoint pens. CPSC is currently pursuing enforcement and recall action against the importer/distributor of these lighters.

Any fire department with questions or concerns regarding disposable, multi-purpose, or novelty lighters are encouraged to call this Department's Western Massachusetts Office at (413) 587-3181 ♦



formal complaint have not received a reply to this day.

Managers and leaders in public organizations need not be surprised that hostile and sexist behaviors toward women permeate organizations with occupations traditionally viewed as "men's work." Formal policies prohibiting sexual harassment are essential for integrating women into public agencies and for keeping everyone protected by the effects of an alleged incident. In many cases, these incidents may be unintentional, but a well-communicated policy may eliminate some of the mishaps. The critical part, and where many Fire Chiefs and other officers' drop the ball, is in implementing strategies for handling sexist attitudes in the workplace. Strategies for combating sexual harassment need to include the following dimensions:

- Publicizing management commitment through a policy statement that clarifies the unacceptable behaviors, spells out the penalties and disciplinary process for violations, and holds supervisors responsible for conduct in their

units through the performance appraisal system.

- Ongoing and *required training* for supervisors and all employees that educates them how to keep the workplace free from sexual harassment, how to handle and report complaints, and provides them opportunities to informally communicate their perceptions about appropriate behavior between the genders in the workplace.
- Efficient and responsive complaint channels that take allegations seriously and process them as violations of the law, protect the victim, and provide counseling for the involved parties.
- Effective enforcement imposing penalties against the perpetrators and those who knowingly allow the behavior.
- Periodic monitoring of the workplace through anonymous and confidential surveys of all employees with results posted, distributed, discussed in sexual awareness training sessions, and monitored

by management.

The U. S. Supreme Court has ruled that companies and organizations that provide legal training for their managers will not be liable for punitive damages.

Sexual harassment is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Chapter 151B, Section 4, Paragraphs 1 and 16B of the Massachusetts General Laws. Chapter 151B, Section 3A, MGL, as inserted by Chapter 278 of the acts of 1996, requires the Commonwealth to develop a written policy against sexual harassment and to provide copies of it to all employees on an annual basis.

Male *and* female firefighters, as well as law enforcement officers, maintenance workers, correction officers, bus drivers, and managers are vulnerable to sexual harassment in the workplaces of public organizations. Protecting public employees from sexist behavior and the public agency from sexual harassment charges simply reflects good management sense and helps keep fires from starting in the station. ♦

# Certification Group Examiner Position Openings

This fiscal year has allowed a limited number of individuals the opportunity to be trained and authorized as Massachusetts Fire Training Council Certification Practical Skills Examiners. The strain on current examiners has become apparent and the need to increase examiners is great. Applicants who are already an instructor with the Academy and have a current 03 contract will automatically be classified as examiner candidate status, if selected. Applicants without these qualifications will undergo a screening process. Our openings are mainly for examiners for firefighter certification who are required to be certified to the level of at least Fire Instructor I and Firefighter II and to be live fire qualified through the Academy. **The deadline for applications is March 2, 2001.**

Additional requirements for this position have been outlined in a document which can be obtained, along with the necessary application, by contacting Julie Kilbride at (978) 567-3228. If you have any questions or need further information you may contact Certification Manager Peter Lamb at (978) 567-3220 or by e-mail at [Peter.Lamb@state.ma.us](mailto:Peter.Lamb@state.ma.us).

## **Massachusetts Public Safety Fire Investigator Certification Coalition**

The Massachusetts Public Safety Fire Investigator Certification Coalition (MPSFICC) is duly authorized by the Secretary of Public Safety as a cooperative entity comprised of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Training Council, and the Massachusetts

State Police. The purpose of the coalition is to provide a comprehensive fire investigator certification program to eligible individuals of the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy has been designated as the entity to administer this program. The certification group had hoped to be able to offer an exam for this level this spring. However, a delay in the receipt of an updated test bank and the need to validate it, will not allow an exam to be administered this semester. The certification group, in coordination with the MPSFICC, hope to be able to offer this exam during the fall semester. Individuals interested in additional information regarding this certification level are encouraged to contact our webpage at [www.state.ma.us/dfs/mfa/cert/mspfi\\_coal.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dfs/mfa/cert/mspfi_coal.htm). ♦

## Safety Alerts from the U.S. Fire Administration Website

### **Recall of Ranger and Servus Leather Structural Firefighting Footwear**

Due to a potential safety concern, Total Fire Group is implementing a voluntary recall of Ranger leather boot models #3042, #3044, #3045 and Servus leather boot models # 6004, #6006, #6008 with a manufacturing date (printed on the inside label) from 1/1/99 through 10/30/99. These boots were independently certified at the time of sale. However, follow up testing has revealed a potential for leakage under extreme conditions that we find unacceptable. Such leakage may result in water, chemical or viral penetration of the boot. We emphasize that very little leakage has been experienced

with products in the field. However, part of the security of the Ranger and Servus brands is knowing that we will never compromise on matters of firefighter safety. Although this voluntary recall presents a very difficult challenge for us, we feel it is the right decision to make. We are confident that our customers will appreciate our efforts to monitor the ongoing quality of our products and our commitment to their safety. Recalled boots will be replaced at no charge with first quality NFPA 1971 replacement leather boots. We have created a RECALL DESK (available at 1-800-688-6148), managed by Dee Jenkins (ext. 226) and Nancy Casillas (ext. 223) to assist customers affected by this recall. ♦



Alerts can be found at:  
[www.usfa.fema.gov/alerts](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/alerts)

## CPSC Votes to Begin Rulemaking to Ban Candles With Lead Wicks

### Major Retailers Agree to Not Sell Lead Wick Candles

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) voted to begin rulemaking that could lead to a ban on candles with lead-core wicks. CPSC has determined that candles using lead wicks could present a lead poisoning hazard to young children.

Studies have found that despite a voluntary industry agreement in the past to remove lead from candle wicks, a small percentage of candles sold today still contains lead in their wicks. The lead cores are used to hold the wicks upright as they burn. The study found that lead-core wicks could emit relatively large amounts of lead into the air during burning. The emitted lead presents a risk to children from exposure through inhalation and from ingestion of lead that may settle on surfaces in the room. This deposited lead could remain accessible to a child for an extended period of time and allow exposure through direct mouth-ing of surfaces or objects or by hand-to-mouth contact.

Some of the candles emitted lead levels in excess of 2,200 micrograms per hour - about five times the rate that could lead to elevated levels of lead in a child. CPSC estimates that a level of 430 micrograms per hour could result in hazardous exposure to children.

The CPSC found that burning a candle with a lead wick for four hours per day, for 15 to 30 days, could result in blood lead levels above the 10 micrograms per deciliter that is considered a health concern for young children.

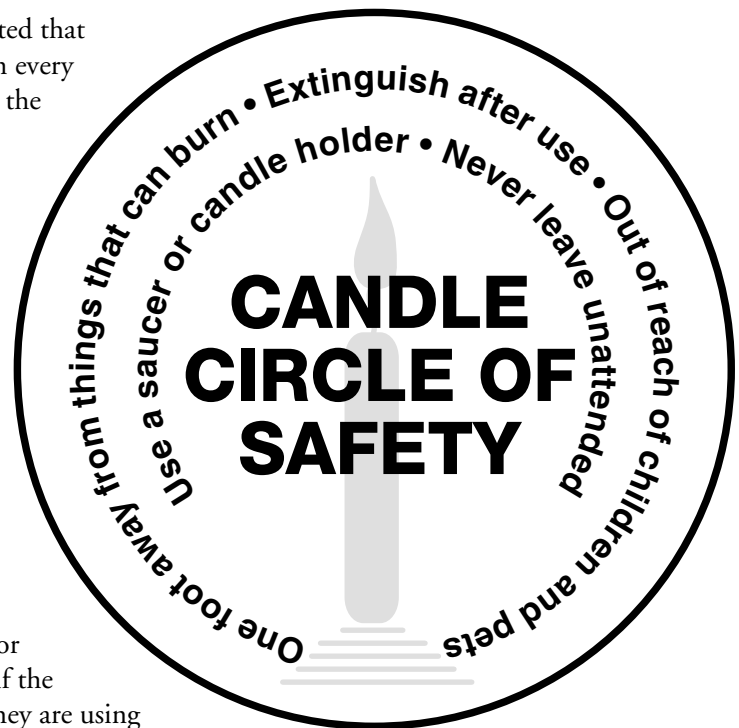
Lead poisoning in children is associated with behavioral problems, learning disabilities, hearing problems and growth retardation. Because lead accumulates in the body, even exposure to small amounts of lead can contribute to the overall level of lead in the

blood. It is estimated that approximately 1 in every 25 children under the age of 6 in the United States has elevated levels of lead in their blood; that is almost one million children nationwide. The primary source of lead poisoning in the United States is lead from paint in old homes.

It is not possible for consumers to tell if the wicks of candles they are using contain lead. CPSC analysis shows that metal wicks, some of which could contain lead, are most likely to be used in container, pillar, votive and tealight candles. Tapers, commonly used as dinner candles, use cotton wicks and do not contain lead.

To check a candle in your home, look at the top of the wick. If there is metal, you will see it in the center of the wick. If you have young children, do not burn candles with metal wicks or throw them away. Rulemaking to set a federal ban would not go into effect before the end of the year. Many retailers currently are not selling candles with lead wicks, including:

Pier 1  
Gap  
Wal-Mart  
Michael's Stores  
Winn-Dixie  
Frank's Nursery & Crafts  
Ahold/USA, parent of Stop & Shop



Giant  
Tops and Peapod  
Blyth, parent of PartyLite  
Bullfrog Light Company  
Atlanta Candle Factory  
Mom's Kitchen Candles

CPSC encourages other retailers to take steps and advise consumers of their efforts to keep candles with lead wicks off store shelves. Consumers should ask stores not specifically listed whether their candles have lead free wicks. Safe alternatives to lead wicks, including zinc, tin, synthetic fibers, cotton and paper, are readily available to manufacturers. A federal ban would apply to all domestic and imported candles. It would deter manufacturers from making non-conforming wicks, allow the U.S. Customs Service to stop shipments of non-conforming candles, and make it easier for the CPSC to seek penalties against companies for violations. ♦

# MFIRS CORNER

## **Maintain Access to Your Version 4 Data**

Remember that fire incident reports are public documents. In the future, you will need to be able to produce copies that reflect the information you originally put on the form. If you convert your data without saving a copy of your database in version 4 format, you will not be able to do that. Talk with your software vendor about whether or not they will convert your version 4 data for you, and how they will allow you to continue to access your historical data.

## **State Will Maintain Version 4 Copy and a Copy Converted to Version 5**

At the state level we will be keeping a copy of all of our version 4 fire incident reports in version 4. We will also be using the federal software conversion program to convert the data from version 4 to 5. (We'll let you know how that goes.) This will allow us to conduct historical research in a single database, while at the same time producing version 4 records in version 4. Converted data can be used for statistical purposes, or researching names and addresses, but it loses value when converted.

## **Version 5 Order Forms**

The paper forms have arrived from the printers. In the February chiefs mailing, an order form went out asking what your version 5 implementation plans are. Do you plan to use software? When do you plan to start? Do you need paper forms? If so which ones and how many? Do you plan to use the Word Forms templates from the website? Do you need any quick reference guides?

## **Version 5 Software Vendors**

The Fire Data Unit will work with any vendor that a fire department selects to ensure the ability to successfully submit MFIRS data electronically. For status of vendor certification by the U.S. Fire Administration please check their website at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

The following is a list of incident reporting software vendors known by the Fire Data Unit to have

Massachusetts fire department customers and the status of their submission of test fires for electronic MFIRS V5 reporting. So far, eight (8) software vendors have received approval for electronic submission of MFIRS version 5 data. Several more are in the middle of the process. One of the things a fire department should consider is whether or not a software vendor has received certification from

the U.S. Fire Administration. The USFA conducts a much more thorough test of the software than we do. A vendor who participates in the USFA certification process also agrees to stay current with any changes the USFA makes. At the moment, the U.S. Fire Administration is making changes every January and every July. ♦

| <b>VENDOR</b> | <b>Submitted Test File to OSFM?</b> | <b>Mass Approved?</b> | <b>USFA Certified?</b> |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| FirePoint     | ✓                                   | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| Firehouse     | ✓                                   | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| Vernon        | ✓                                   | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| Pamet         | ✓                                   | ✓                     |                        |
| DM Data       | ✓                                   | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| KeyinfoSys    | ✓                                   | ✓                     |                        |
| FirePrograms  | ✓                                   | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| QED           | ✓                                   | ✓                     | ✓                      |
| IMC           |                                     |                       |                        |
| Alpine        |                                     |                       | ✓                      |
| ProberChief   |                                     |                       |                        |
| FireOne       |                                     |                       | ✓                      |
| Microsystems  |                                     |                       |                        |

# MFIRS Version 5 Order Form

Name of Fire Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of MFIRS Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated start date of Version 5 implementation: \_\_\_\_\_ 2001

Software Vendor/Program: \_\_\_\_\_

If department currently does not have a software vendor/program, indicate name and planned date of software purchase (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Word Template Forms are available from the DFS website:

[www.magnet.state.ma.us/dfs/firedata/v5\\_forms.htm](http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/dfs/firedata/v5_forms.htm)

Plan to use V5 forms downloaded from the website? (Check one) Yes ☐ No ☐

If NO, do you need paper forms? (Check one) Yes ☐ No ☐ See below for forms type and ordering.

## PAPER FORMS

### REQUIRED FORMS:

### # Requested

Basic Form

\_\_\_\_\_

Fire and Structure Fire Form

\_\_\_\_\_

Civilian Casualty Form

\_\_\_\_\_

Fire Service Casualty Form

\_\_\_\_\_

Arson/Juvenile Firesetter Form

\_\_\_\_\_

### OPTIONAL FORMS:

HazMat

\_\_\_\_\_

EMS Casualty Form

\_\_\_\_\_

Wildland Fire Form

\_\_\_\_\_

Version 5 Quick Reference Guide Coding Manual - How many do you need?  
(Number should not exceed number of stations in district): \_\_\_\_\_



# FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY EDUCATION

## Western Massachusetts Family Fire Safety Day Promotes the S.A.F.E. Program

On Sunday, June 24, 2001, in conjunction with the New England Fire Chief's Association Conference, the Western Massachusetts Family Fire Safety Day will be held at the "Big E" Fairgrounds in West Springfield. Public fire educators who participated last year had a great time meeting and performing for the crowds interested in the fire service and public fire and life safety education. The all day affair will start at 10:00 a.m. and run until 4:00 p.m.

If you and any other member of your department's S.A.F.E. Team is available to showcase your static or interactive displays and educational demonstrations, please contact Jennifer Mieth by phone at (978) 567-3381 or by e-mail at [Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us](mailto:Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us). ♦



## S.A.F.E. Statewide In-Service Training



The 2001 statewide in-service training for all S.A.F.E. Educators was held on Tuesday, January 30, 2001 at the Department of Fire

Services in Stow. Ninety-four (94) educators representing 71 fire departments attended this in-service training.

Cindy Ouellette, a school health educator in the North Attleboro School system was our special guest. She presented a program outlining a practical approach to teaching fire safety education in the middle school. Cindy's presentation gave the S.A.F.E. educator a clear definition of who the middle school student is and what type of role we will need to maintain in order to be effective as public educators in the classroom.

A program on "Sharing of Ideas" was also presented by S.A.F.E. Coordinator Charlie Johnson. This program reviewed some of the original programs that are currently being presented across the Commonwealth by S.A.F.E. educators. A special thanks goes out to all of the S.A.F.E. educators who shared their own creative ideas and program tips with their classmates. ♦

## Arson Watch Reward Program Poster Contest

The Arson Watch Reward Program is pleased to announce its 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Poster Contest for all students in grades 5-8 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island.

This year's theme is "**Make Safety The Key Ingredient In Cooking.**" According to the 1999 statistics taken from the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System, cooking and smoking were tied as the leading cause of residential fire deaths. Educating the public about fire safety is one of the most important ways to reduce the fire problem. We can all assist in this very important issue by becoming fire prevention educators and by displaying good examples to everyone by reminding them to practice fire prevention in their homes, workplace and everyday activities. This year's poster theme is a reminder to you and your family members to follow all safety rules when cooking.

Deadline for submission is Wednesday, April 11, 2001. For contest rules call Jennifer Mieth at 978-567-3380 or Nancy Rodes at 617-557-5535. ♦



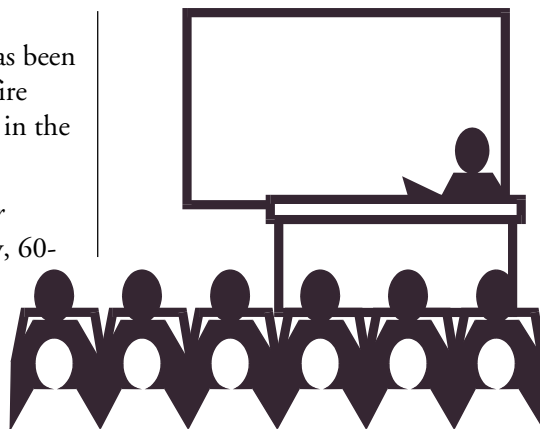
## Fire Officer Group Information

Since the last issue, the Fire Officer Training Group has been busy bringing training to the fire officers and future fire officers in the Commonwealth.

We have presented *Fire Officer Supervisory Training*, a ten-day, 60-hour classroom program dealing with the issues today's fire officer must manage. This has been offered in Haverhill and Springfield with over 30 students in each of those classes had over 30 students each. We have three more offerings this year: March 5 we will be in Plymouth's Cedarville station, March 26 we will be in the Malden/Saugus area; and we will finish the year in Fitchburg with a start date of April 23, 2001. Anyone interested in taking one of these classes should submit an application as soon as possible. This is a priority selection class with preference given to current officers, then senior firefighters, then to firefighters by date of application.

We will present the second offering of *Fire Officer: Advanced Leadership Training* in Concord May 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 11. This class is designed to address issues concerning the company officer and requires the participants to *think outside of the box*. It will be offered three days per week for two weeks to accommodate the busy schedules of the target audience. Our first offering was in Westford in early November and was presented two days a week for three weeks.

The shifting of resources in the *District Delivery* program has allowed us to present more of the stand alone, 12-hour officer training programs. We have already completed *Leadership I* in Onset, *Leadership III* in Truro and West Boylston. We will also be offering *Multiple*



*Company Tactical Operations (MCTO) Preparation* in Woburn, April 2 and 4; *Incident Command* in Mendon, April 10, 12 and 14 and *Wildland-Urban Interface for the Company Officer* in Harwich, April 11 and 14.

### **Development of Tactical Training**

We have started the development process for a stand alone, tactical training program for the company officer. It will focus on the officer's role in company management on the emergency scene. We will address the officer's role in firefighter safety and demonstrate specific techniques. This will be offered to fire officer supervisory training graduates as optional training.

### **Looking for Instructors**

In addition to planning, scheduling and presenting these programs, we are also actively recruiting new and seasoned instructors to the Fire Officer Training Group to maintain the ability to present these quality programs. Robert Loomer was appointed as Assistant Coordinator of the group in December and will assist in this recruiting effort. Any instructor who would like to work in the Fire Officer Group is encouraged to contact Coordinator Kevin Robinson or Assistant Coordinator Bob Loomer at 978-567-3217. ♦



## Update on Blasting Issues

In the case of blasting incidents no news is good news. As we look back at 2000, it is good to now be able to report that blasting incidents have dropped dramatically since those warm days of last summer. Even though it has been cold and snowy, a lot of blasting has continued to occur in the Commonwealth. While there have been some minor issues, we have not seen the types of incidents involving injuries and property damage that occurred last summer. That is very good news!

With the new year comes a change in the leadership of the organization representing the blasting industry. The New England Society of Explosives Engineers (NESEE) has elected a new president to head this regional group whose membership represents all facets of the New England blasting industry. In January of 2001, Douglas Ryan was elected as the new president of the NESEE. The Office of the State Fire Marshal looks forward to working with Mr. Ryan. A lot of effort has been made by the blasting industry in recent years to establish and keep open positive lines of communication with

the fire service. It is anticipated that this effort will continue under Mr. Ryan's leadership. There were some difficult times last year for both the fire service and the blasting industry. During the last three years, outgoing NESEE president Sandy Penttinen represented the blasting industry well. Sandy was very responsive to the concerns expressed by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and made good communications a priority.

Looking ahead to the coming year, the Office of the State Fire Marshal will be meeting with blasting industry representatives on several important issues. During meetings last fall, discussions were held on licensing of blasters and the renewal process. We agreed that better training in preparation for a new license and continued education for the renewal of a license would be a mutual goal for the near future. Currently there is no regulatory requirement for such training. Establishment of that requirement will need to take place through the regulatory process. The industry would then provide specific opportunities for an individual to

receive training. There will be additional discussions regarding use of seismographs and blasting logs. These are two very important issues in dealing with blasting incidents, complaints and damage claims.

The blasting damage complaint process as described in 527 CMR 13.00 will be a topic of discussion as well. The fire departments in the Commonwealth and the Office of the State Fire Marshal spend a good amount of time dealing with damage complaints. A good portion of the complaints that are filed, are in fact just complaints, as opposed to damage claims. An equally large number of the damage claims that come through the system are filed well outside of the timeframe specified by the regulation. Input will be sought from the fire service, the insurance industry, and the blasting industry in the near future as to how to deal with complaints vs. damage claims.

Should you have any questions regarding blasting or any other issues, please feel free to call the Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit at (978) 567-3300 or in western Mass. at (413) 587-3181. ♦

### What is a "RockCracker"?

No, it is not a new snack food. RockCracker is a new explosives product available to the commercial explosives industry. It is described as a "composite propellant" and is classified 1.4C. Of interest regarding this product is some of the wording that is present in the marketing materials that are distributed to prospective customers. The phrase, "Generally, no blasting permit is required as for conventional explosives", is potentially misleading. While this product is a step down from high explosives from an energy standpoint, it is still very powerful and belongs only in the hands of properly

licensed and permitted individuals. The Office of the State Fire Marshal has discussed this issue with the manufacturer of the product.

While there are some issues with how this product is being marketed in the Commonwealth, it does appear to be a viable alternative to high explosives. This product is designed for use where high explosives may generate too much energy and is intended for use in close proximity blasting where the impact of the explosive needs to be minimal. While primarily used in a one hole per shot application, this product can be used in multiple

hole configurations. The Office of the State Fire Marshal has witnessed a demonstration of this product and has determined that all the requirements of 527 CMR 13.00 shall be in effect for the use of this product.

There is additional information available in a mailing sent to each fire department in December of 2000. Should you have any questions regarding this issue please feel free to call the Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit or Technical Services at either (978) 567-3300 or in Western Mass. (413) 587-3181. ♦

## Blasting Detail Orientation Seminars

The group of Blasting Detail Orientation seminars scheduled for Lexington in March and April will be the last in this series until later this year. If your department has an interest in getting any personnel into this program, they should pre-register as soon as possible. These four programs will all be morning programs and will be held on March 20, 22, 27 and April 10.

This has been a very successful program with considerable interest from a number of departments. To date, there have been 20 seminars conducted across the Commonwealth since September, with good attendance at each of them. The intent of this seminar has been to provide a foundation of knowledge for the firefighter who may be assigned to a blasting detail. Where a firefighter on detail serves as a representative of the permitting authority, his/her primary interest is to verify general compliance with the blasting regulation. Some of

the most basic elements of the regulation are the items of interest to a blasting detail. Transportation, storage, site security, warning signals, seismographs and blasting logs are topics that have been discussed at these seminars. A key point that has been presented during these programs is that the blaster has the overall responsibility for the safe handling and use of the explosives on the site. As a license holder, the blaster is the qualified individual to make determinations regarding "how much explosives to use" during a blasting operation. While there are a number of other areas of interest, the firefighter on detail is not on site to "supervise" the actual loading of explosives into holes.

Evidence of the success of these programs lies in several instances where the firefighter has made those basic observations for compliance, and in fact had observed questionable activities regarding transportation, site safety and site security. At least two of those observations led to prevention of

potential injuries where the blast sites had not been properly secured and cleared of personnel and the firefighter on detail intervened, making sure those persons were removed to the designated secure area. Another incident, while initially considered minor, led to other more significant compliance issues once an investigation was made. One of these incidents resulted in the discovery of a blaster illegally storing explosives at his residence.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal will continue to develop new programs related to the use of commercial explosives in the Commonwealth that will inform and educate the fire service. Watch for flyers and notices in future mailings. As always, should you have any questions regarding blasting issues please feel free to call the Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit at either (978) 567-3300 or in western Mass. (413) 587-3181. ♦

## New Policy Directive from MassHighway Regarding Blasting

MassHighway has recently issued a new policy directive relative to blasting adjacent to state highways. This directive is a result of meetings between MassHighway and the Office of the State Fire Marshal late in 2000. The focus of this directive is traffic control on state highways, traffic control plans, advance warning of such traffic stoppage, and blasting plans that describe precautions to be taken by the blasting contractor to protect the adjacent state highway. One of the key aspects of this directive is communication between the blasting contractor, head of the fire department and

MassHighway well in advance of the blasting operations. While the directive document itself is too large to include in this newsletter, the entire document has been sent to each fire department in the Commonwealth in the form of an advisory. Efforts are currently underway to inform the blasting industry as well.

Should you have any questions regarding this issue please feel free to call the Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit or Technical Services at either (978) 567-3300 or in Western Mass. (413) 587-3181. ♦



## DPH Makes 4,000 Free Smoke Alarms Available

The Department of Public Health (DPH) was always seen preventing fire and burn injuries as part of their mission. They recently completed a three-year project on home smoke alarms in conjunction with Brockton Fire Chief Galligan, Lynn Fire Chief Numberg, and Lowell Fire Chief LaCourse. This project is making 4,000 smoke alarms available to any local fire department who team up with a community agency (a list of suggested agencies is available), or to a community agency that teams up with a local fire department. With the increase in fire deaths in 2000, we are particularly excited to announce this joint project. A summary of the program and a short, easy application will be sent to all fire departments by the Department of Fire Services and to a large number of community agencies by the Department of Public Health.

### **Home Visitors Who Educate Key to Success**

Two important facts were learned through this project that teach us about how to get smoke alarms installed and keep them functioning a year later. One is that fire department code enforcement efforts are extremely effective. The second is that home visitors who explain best placement for detectors and make free or low-cost ones available (whether or not they install them) is the most effective strategy. This is where the community agency partner comes in. Many senior centers, councils on aging, healthy baby programs, public health agencies,

lead poison prevention programs, weatherization programs, and meals on wheels already regularly conduct home visits. Fire departments have the information on smoke alarms and proper placement. Working with another agency, splitting up the work, can make this an easy project for a busy fire department to take on. We hope that every fire department will take advantage of this opportunity; we know smoke alarms make the difference between life and death. Be prepared to be contacted by a community agency who is interested in

participating in this project.

### **Installation**

The project found that installation was not a necessary component when education and free or low-cost detectors were made available. However, if the fire department or the community agency do include installation as part of the smoke alarm project, a waiver of liability should be used and approved either by town counsel or by the community agency's counsel. We have a sample available for your counsel to use as a basis only. ♦



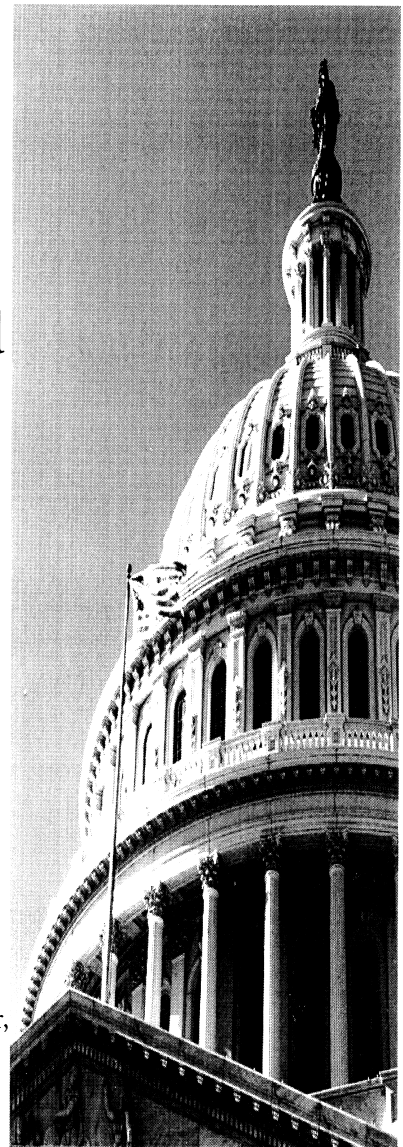
The Congressional Fire  
Services Institute  
presents...

## The Thirteenth Annual Fire and Emergency Services Dinner and Seminars

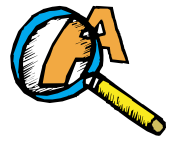
April 25, 2001  
Washington Hilton and  
Towers  
Washington, DC



For more information or to register,  
visit our web site, [www.cfsi.org](http://www.cfsi.org), or  
call Jori Wilmoth, CFSI Director  
of Events, at (202) 371-1277.







## **Fire Investigators Help Catch Bank Robbers**

On Wednesday, January 17, 2001, two troopers and K-9 Billie, assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal, Fire and Explosion Investigation Section, responded to a Provincetown structure fire in a 2-story, wood-frame seasonal home. The fire was determined to be intentionally set. As a result of interviews, descriptions of two suspects seen taking bicycles from the scene were developed. At the same time, Provincetown police officers responded to a bank robbery. Eyewitness descriptions from the bank robbery matched the fire suspects. A joint investigation by the Cape and Islands State Police Detectives Unit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Provincetown Police Department and state police fire investigators in the Office of the State Fire Marshal ensued. Two suspects were located in a dwelling and apprehended. Investigators recovered a gun as well as the money taken from the bank. They got a full confession from the suspects which revealed that the fire was intended as a diversion from the bank robbery.

## **Community Cooperation Solves Weekend Rash of Lawrence Arsons**

On Sunday, August 6, 2000, the North Team responded to a motor vehicle fire at 386-388 Lowell Street, Lawrence. The Lawrence Fire Investigation Unit indicated that within a 30-hour period over the weekend there had been four separate fires within a one-block radius. The fires resulted in damage to seven vehicles and two homes.

During the course of the investigation, a member of the community was seen hanging around the area of the fourth fire which occurred August 6 at 4:51 a.m. The youth stated he had been out all night and was on his way home when he saw the fire trucks in front of his house. He also said he had run into a kid, who lives across the street from him, the day before between 3 and 4 p.m. During their conversation the kid told the young man about doing some bad stuff and blowing up a car by putting gas on it. The man had indicated he did not believe him and the kid had said under his breath, "You'll see tonight."

Through neighborhood canvassing, investigators located the juvenile who lived in the area of the fires, and interviewed him in his mother's presence. The teenager's parents had gone away for the weekend for the first time in many years, leaving their sons home. After being mirandized and advised that investigators had information that he was involved in starting the fires, the young man made a full admission to being responsible for intentionally setting all four fires.

Cooperation from the community, alert local fire investigators making the connection between the fires in the neighborhood, cooperation from the tow-yard which permitted a forensic analysis of the motor vehicles, brought this case to a quick resolution over the weekend. The young man was charged with three counts of arson of a dwelling, seven counts of burning a motor vehicle and four counts of breaking and entering a motor vehicle to commit a felony. The juvenile pled

guilty and was sentenced to a Department of Youth Services Detention Facility until he reaches his eighteenth birthday. As a result of his assistance in the investigation, the community member will be nominated for an arson watch reward.

## **Arsonist Charged with Polluting Too!**

On September 8, 2000, a man used copious amounts of gasoline to start a fire in his pick-up truck which was parked right up against his home. The Mass. Department of Environmental Protection, partner in the joint investigation, said 14 gallons of gasoline had been allowed to leak out of a 19-gallon tank before the fire. Fortunately a neighbor noticed the fire and, using a garden hose, was able to contain it until the Taunton Fire Department arrived to fully extinguish it. This prevented the home from becoming a fully involved exposure fire.

The arsonist is charged with attempting to burn a dwelling – a five year felony, burning of a motor vehicle – a 10-year felony, and illegal disposal of hazardous materials – a 20 year felony, as well as possession of a dangerous weapon and malicious destruction of property over \$250.

What is most amusing about this case is that the arsonist taunted investigators that they would never make the arson charges stick. He may now prefer the arson charges to the environmental pollution ones. ♦

## Harvard's S.A.F.E Program *(continued from page 1)*

such as mothballs from the inside of the cigarette pack. It is identified with its chemical name or compound that may be found in cigarettes. Some of the props used are formaldehyde, toilet cleaner, insecticides, arsenic, PVC2, nail polish remover, urethane, carbon monoxide and lighter fluid. Students are reminded that the chemicals in mothballs are also found in cigarettes and asked if they want that chemical in them.

Studies have suggested that real benefits are seen if students learn about

the hazards of tobacco before the fourth grade. Therefore, they have selected the third grade to campaign the anti-tobacco prop. In Harvard they teach home escape planning to all students, pre-school through sixth grade, targeting each grade with an individual life safety skill. The cigarette box has received an eager response from our students, and a great deal curiosity from adults. This prop has endless potential. ♦

## Joe Allbaugh Confirmed As FEMA Director

Joe Allbaugh, President George W. Bush's choice to head FEMA, was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate on February 15. As FEMA Director, Mr. Allbaugh will coordinate federal disaster relief on behalf of President Bush, including the response and recovery activities of 28 federal agencies and departments, the

American Red Cross and other voluntary agencies. He also will oversee the National Flood Insurance Program, the U.S. Fire Administration and other pro-active mitigation activities, such as Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities, that reduce loss of life and property from all types of hazards. ♦

The DFS Quarterly is published every March, June, September, and December. If you have some newsworthy information to share with the fire service, you are welcome to submit articles to: Jennifer Mieth, Editor, DFS Quarterly, Dept. of Fire Services, P.O. Box 1025, Stow, MA 01775. (978) 567-3381 or Internet Address: Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us

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